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some fables, bits from the *1001 Nights* and from modern romances and newspapers, correspondence, business and private, and forms of contract, sale, hire, etc.

The book will be useful to several classes of students. It should be carefully worked through by any one who wishes to learn to talk Arabic. It will not teach him to do so—for that he must simply listen and talk—but it is an almost essential first step. Secondly, those who wish to read Arabic newspapers, and the new Arabic literature which is growing up, will find here a sufficient introduction. And, thirdly, the students of Arabic who do not begin with a knowledge of Hebrew, such as the increasing class of Sanscritists and Zend scholars who recognize the value of Arabic historical literature, will find here their easiest path. It will lead them straight to al-Bērūnī, al-Mas'ūdī, and the rest.

To these and to all learners of Arabic the book can be cordially recommended.

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ROTHSTEIN, THE DYNASTY OF ḤĪRA.¹

While the "kingdom" of Ḥīra was not of great size, its history is of sufficient interest and importance to deserve careful study, so that we feel that Dr. Rothstein was happy in his choice of a subject for investigation.

Dr. Rothstein divides his little work into nine sections, some of which we shall speak of particularly. After some discussion of the literature of the subject in the first section (pp. 1-5), the author turns in the second (pp. 5-12) to a consideration of the sources, both Arabic and non-Arabic. He well points out with how great caution the Arabic chronicles dealing with this period must be used, and his remarks on the old Arabic poets give a very good idea of the difficulties and uncertainties which attend their use as sources. The author emphasizes the value of the Syrian and Byzantine writings, and feels that Nöldeke very properly based his chronology on these.

Section four—"The Inhabitants of al-Ḥīra"—(pp. 18-40) contains some interesting discussions. Of the three classes into which the author divides the population of al-Ḥīra we shall mention only the second, the *Ibād*. By this word *Ibād* is meant, according to the author, the Christians, members of different tribes, who dwelt in al-Ḥīra. The author points out that there were Christian bishops of al-Ḥīra very early in the fifth century, and that, when the oriental church divided up, the Christians of al-Ḥīra joined the Nestorians. It was, no doubt, from the *Ibād* that many Christian ideas found their way into Arabic. For not only was al-Ḥīra one of the great points of the caravan trade, but its court was eagerly sought by the Arab poets. Its culture was largely Aramaic;

¹ DIE DYNASTIE DER LAHMIDEN IN AL-ḤĪRA. Ein Versuch zur arabisch-persischen Geschichte zur Zeit der Sasaniden. Von Dr. phil. Gustav Rothstein. Berlin: Reuther und Reichard, 1899. vi+152 pp. M. 4.50.

the Christians used Syriac as their church language, and in this way many terms were introduced into the Arabic. Our author agrees with Wellhausen in thinking that the Christians, and especially the *Ibād*, contributed not a little to the formation of an Arabic literary language.

The fifth, sixth, and seventh sections are entitled, respectively: "The Rise of the Dynasty of Naṣr" (pp. 41-50); "The Lists of the 'Kings' of al-Ḥira" (pp. 50-60); "The History of the Laḥmid Dynasty" (pp. 60-125).

In the eighth section (pp. 125-38) there is a discussion of such general questions as the relation of al-Ḥira to the Persians and Arabs, the organization of the state, etc. Section nine (pp. 138-43) treats of the position of the Laḥmids in the matter of religion.

There are two indexes, one of the persons and subjects mentioned, and the other of the poets cited.

In his preface Dr. Rothstein acknowledges his great indebtedness to Nöldeke, but throughout his book he gives evidence of much independent study. In view of the character of the sources of this period, it is only natural that some scholars might differ with Dr. Rothstein in some matters of detail. But we feel that he has produced a good piece of work, and we shall be glad to welcome further results of his investigation.

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NÖLDEKE'S SYRIAC GRAMMAR.¹

When a master in Aramaic like Professor Nöldeke gives us a Syriac grammar, we can but receive it with gratitude. When that grammar is the second edition of one that for nearly twenty years has been the comrade and guide of all students of Syriac, but little more remains to be said. Praise is superfluous; criticism is little in place. The book in its former edition approved itself as the clearest and most accurate introduction to the language with which it deals, and also as the most thorough investigation of the laws on which that language moves.

The following are the principal additions and changes which the grammar shows in its new form. Instead of the ugly and angular Maronite type which has disgraced our Syriac printing for so long, the rounded and graceful Drugulin font is used; this means more space, but that does not matter. Further, to the table of the alphabet on p. 2 the Nestorian is added, a welcome addition for students who are puzzling their way through the cramped text of the Bible Society. In Euting's table of Aramaic scripts we find four new columns: of the Senjirli inscriptions, and that of Taymā, of Nabatean, and of Palmyrene; Palmyrene, especially, is of the highest interest as a joining place of square Hebrew and Estrangelo Syriac. On p. 4 the pronunciation of the palatal ܥ is more exactly indicated. In the preface is noticed how the synoptic gospels read more idiomatically and flowingly in Syriac than

¹ KURZGEFASSTE SYRISCHE GRAMMATIK. Von Theodor Nöldeke. Zweite verbesserte Auflage. Mit einer Schrifttafel von Julius Euting. Leipzig: Chr. Herm. Tauchnitz, 1898. xxxiv + 306 pp.; 8vo. M. 12.